CFIRE Sponsors REES Summit

The American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association (AREMA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the Association of American Railroads (AAR), organized the symposium out of concern over the disappearance of railroad engineering from most engineering curricula in the U.S. and Canada. CFIRE was a sponsoring organization.

CFIRE director Teresa Adams participated in the symposium along with 33 professors from across the country and from as far away as Nigeria. The following seven topics were covered:

- Introduction to Railroad Engineering
- Introduction to Railway Infrastructure
- Railroad Power, Acceleration, and Traffic Control
- Railroad Intermodal Transportation
- Transit/Commuter/Intercity Rail Transportation
- Railroad capacity and
- Railroad Engineering Design Project

Other topics were covered during the two days of class instructions included a vision for the importance of providing Railroad Engineering Education in engineering classes, the current and future needs for capacity expansion, an overview of North American railroad engineering course offerings and research programs, and panel discussions on railroad engineering education and recruitment needs.

Course materials were distributed to encourage professors to add railroad topics to transportation classes or to develop new railroad engineering courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

After two days of instruction, participants toured the Norfolk Southern rail yard in Decatur, Illinois to provide a first-hand look at railroad operations.

The historic symposium made professors aware of the importance of railroad engineering to freight movement and the resources required for rail freight mobility. Railroad company representatives indicated that railroad education commands competitive salaries in today’s market.

“These next step is for the participants to convince their colleagues to find room for material in already crowded engineering undergraduate curriculums,” Adams said. “The US freight rail system is the envy of the world. Think about what we could accomplish if we have a new generation of US engineers interested in this mode.”